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ABSTRACT

This lesson plan for grade 3 intends for students to use creative dramatics to demonstrate an understanding of three ways a mountain can be formed; students will also explore the effects of elevation on plant and animal life and on weather in the regions on both sides of a mountain. The lesson should take two to four days to implement. It provides detailed information and an overview for the teacher; cites relevant national standards; lists instructional objectives and strategies; and offers a step-by-step instructional plan. The lesson also discusses assessment and extensions. (NKA)

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Curricula, Lessons and Activities

Mountains: A Drama Exploration

Resource Type: lesson

Length: 2 to 4 days

Grade: 3

Subjects: Language Arts, Performing Arts, Science

Subtopics: History, Literature, Theater

Intelligences Being Addressed:
- Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence
- Interpersonal Intelligence
- Intrapersonal Intelligence
- Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence
- Visual/Spatial Intelligence

Dimensions of Learning:
- Acquisition and integration of knowledge
- Extension and refinement of knowledge
- Meaningful use of knowledge

Overview: Students will use creative dramatics to demonstrate an understanding of three ways a mountain can be formed. Students will also explore the affects of elevation on plant and animal life and on weather in the regions on both sides of a mountain, and how mountains are formed,

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CS 511 358

through creative drama.

Equipment:

- Computer Mac or PC with Internet access

Media & Materials:

Printouts: This lesson does not have any printouts.

Student Supplies:

Other Materials:

- Foam core
- Props and costumes for the play
- Pictures of the Rocky or Appalachian Mountains (optional)
- *Swamp Angel*; by Anne Isaacs and Paul O. Zelinsky; Dutton Children's Book, 1994.

Related Textbooks: "Touching the Clouds" and "The Mountain That Loved a Bird"; by Alice McLerran; in *From Sea to Shining Sea*; by Beverly J. Armento, J. Jorge Klor de Alva, Gary B. Nash, Christopher L. Salter, Louis E. Wilson, and Karen K. Wixson; Houghton Mifflin, 1994.

Disaster, *Invitations to Literacy* series; Houghton Mifflin, 1999.

Teacher Internet Resources: **Lesson and Extension Specific Resources:**

- **Mountain Formation**
  http://www.oneonta.edu/~hessf77/mountain.html

  Created by an Earth Science student, this site includes discussions on mountain formation, volcanoes, mountain chains, and related links for further study of particular ranges and volcanoes.

- **Plate Tectonics**
  http://www.platetectonics.com/

This site provides information ranging from the history of the Earth's formation to the climate of Earth and the species that inhabit it. This particular page on mountain ranges explores plate tectonics.

General Internet Resources:

- **Creative Drama & Theater Education Resource Site**
  http://www.creativedrama.com

  Creative Drama provides activities for classroom use and other drama links for educators. Classroom ideas, plays for performance, theater games, and a book list are among the available links on this site.

- **Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute: Weather, Climate and Environmental Change**
  http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1991/6/91.06.01.x.html

  This site provides in-depth information and a unit on global changes on Earth and the evidence for why these changes take place. Some topics included are climate, precipitation, clouds, wind, and dewpoint.

National Standards for Arts Education:

- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 1 : Script writing by planning and recording improvisations based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 2 : Acting by assuming roles and interacting in improvisations
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 3 : Designing by visualizing and arranging environments for classroom dramatizations
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 4 : Directing by planning classroom dramatizations

Click here for additional information on the National Standards for Arts Education

Other National Standards:

- Geography #4, #7, #8
- Language Arts Reading #5, Listening and Speaking #8
- Life Skills Working with Others #1, #4; Thinking and Reasoning #6

Source of Standards: McRel

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For more on the Standards in other subjects, please refer to the Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL) website.

State Standards, if any:

To search the State Arts Standards, please visit the National Conference of State Legislatures website.

Instructional Objectives:

Students will be able to complete the following:

Social Studies: Geography

- Define a mountain and how it affects plant and animal life and the weather of regions on both of the mountain's sides.

Social Studies: Skills and Processes

- Identify occasions and processes for making decisions by participating in discussions and by accepting decisions.
- Interact with others in groups to achieve common goals by showing willingness to participate in group activities and by practicing collaborative learning roles.

Reading to be Informed

- Demonstrate an adequate understanding of informational sources.
- Suggest connections between their ideas and the text.
- Support responses with adequate text-based information.

Oral Language: Listening

- Listen to gain information.
- Listen to a variety of literary forms.

Strategies:

- Direct instruction
- Silent reading
- Cooperative learning
- Group process
- Hands-on activity

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Instructional Plan:

WARM UP

1. Students will read the story *Swamp Angel* by Anne Issacs. They will listen for a mountain range named in the story.
2. They will decide, after reading, if this is a true story or a tall tale, and will support their answers with examples from the text.
3. If Swamp Angel and Thundering Tarnation (a giant girl and a giant bear, respectively) had formed the Great Smoky Mountains, they would have pushed the land toward each other.
4. Hold up three or four layers of different colors of foam core. They will easily bend upwards, demonstrating the folded formation of mountains.

INTRODUCTORY AND DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES:

1. Use three or four colored layers of foam core and demonstrate plate movement. Explain that the earth's crust is riding on several plates of land. The crust breaks into giant blocks and collide into each other. Some blocks move upwards and some blocks move downwards. (The foam is very pliable and will demonstrate this well.) This kind of mountain formation is called a block formation. The Rocky Mountains are an example of this.
2. The Appalachian Mountains were also formed this way. Pictures or rocks of the Appalachian or Rocky Mountains can be passed around for hands-on examination.

GUIDED PRACTICE:

1. Students set up a K-W-L chart about volcanoes. They fill in the K and W parts.
2. Discuss how a volcano forms a dome. In *Disasters*, from the *Invitations to Literacy* series, read page 258.
3. Students read "History Makers" in *Disasters* on pages 276-279. This selection is about famous volcanic eruptions.
4. Students now complete the L part of their K-W-L charts.

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES:

1. Students read "Touching the Clouds," pages 44-47, in *From Sea to Shining Sea*.
2. Students answer all review questions on page 47.
3. The class is then broken into groups of four.
4. Assign roles to students in each group: a playwright (who writes or takes notes about mountains); a director (has the final say, the leader); an actor (moves body, tells the story); and a designer (makes props, costumes, scenery). Write jobs and definitions on

the board. All group members may act. More than one group may act out the same piece.

5. Groups are assigned one of the following to dramatize:
   - folded formation
   - volcano formation
   - block formation
   - how elevation affects plants on mountains
   - how elevation affects animals on mountains
   - how elevation affects weather on both sides of a mountain
6. Give students a time limit of 15 minutes to present the pieces. Check the groups after 10 minutes and give an extension of no more than 5 minutes (for a limit of 20 minutes) if many groups seem to be in trouble. Even if the group is still in process, let them present. (Too much time can cause chaos!) The final product can be short.

Assessment:

1. Grade review questions from page 47 in *From Sea to Shining Sea*.
2. The groups perform their pieces. The audience of the other students assess if the piece demonstrated what the group was assigned and explain what may have been learned from the presentation.

Extensions:

Read "The Mountain That Loved a Bird" by Alice McLerran on page 47A-47C in the Teacher's Edition of *From Sea to Shining Sea*.

Teacher References:

1. *Swamp Angel*; by Anne Isaacs and Paul O. Zelinsky; Dutton Children's Book, 1994.
2. *Disaster*, *Invitations to Literacy* series; Houghton Mifflin, 1999.

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